

Americans are looking for Republicans to address the problems we face, but Republicans cannot solve them alone. The problems are too big, too demanding for one party, and we will never succeed in solving them if we retreat to our corners until another election comes around. If our predecessors had done that, they would have never solved anything at all, and this institution would have lost its relevance a long time ago. But they didn't, and neither can we.

The men who established this place have left us the right tools for the job. It is my hope that in the weeks and months ahead, we will use them to renew the promise that inspired them and that continues to inspire Americans even in difficult times. That promise is the American dream. It is what unites everyone in this Chamber. Preserving it must be our common task.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business and that there be 30 minutes for tributes regarding Senator MIKULSKI's milestone; that upon conclusion of MIKULSKI-related remarks, there be 45 minutes for Senator HARKIN; that upon the conclusion of Senator HARKIN's remarks, the Republican leader or his designee control the next 35 minutes; further, that following that time controlled by the Republican leader, Senators be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMENDING SENATOR MIKULSKI

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to make some remarks regarding my dear friend and seatmate on the Appropriations Committee and a member of my Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

I join with the entire Senate family in saluting my good friend, the distinguished senior Senator from Maryland, on becoming the longest serving woman in the history of the Senate. This is truly a remarkable milestone.

I note that Cal Ripken, the former star of Senator MIKULSKI's hometown

Baltimore Orioles, became known as the "Iron Man" for going 16 consecutive years without missing a game. Now perhaps Senator MIKULSKI has earned the title of "Iron Woman" for going 24 consecutive years in this body without ever deviating from her role as a fierce advocate for Marylanders and for working people across our country.

I hasten to add that the measure of a Senator is not how many years he or she serves in the body but what he or she accomplishes during those years. That is where Senator MIKULSKI has truly distinguished herself over the last quarter of a century.

I especially salute her activism and leadership on the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, formerly chaired, of course, by Senator Kennedy and which I am now privileged to chair. She has been a leading champion of Pell grants and for expanding access to higher education for students of modest means. Of course, as has been stated, she has been the Senate's leading voice on women's health issues, fighting to ensure women are included in clinical trials and medical research at the National Institutes of Health, and securing access to breast and cervical cancer screenings for women without health insurance.

Senator MIKULSKI took the lead in writing the sections of the new health reform law that focus on improving the quality of care. At every turn in the drafting of that historic legislation, she fought to ensure that the unique health needs of women were fully recognized and accommodated.

As chair of the Subcommittee on Retirement and Aging, Senator MIKULSKI has been an outspoken advocate for seniors, focusing especially on combating elder abuse and neglect. I know she is especially proud of authoring the Spousal Anti-Impoverishment Act, which keeps seniors from going bankrupt while paying for a spouse's nursing home care. I might also add, no one has been a more fierce supporter and defender of the right for people to have an attorney through the legal aid system in America. She has fought very hard to make sure we strengthened the National Legal Services Corporation and to make sure it receives adequate funding so people who have no money aren't barred from the courthouse door.

We admire the work of BARBARA MIKULSKI not as a female Senator per se but as one of 100 Senators. On this day we also recognize that she was the first woman elected to the Senate whose husband or father did not serve in high office. We salute her as the proud dean among Senate women who has gone to extraordinary lengths for so many years to mentor and guide newly elected women Senators of both parties.

I join my colleagues in congratulating Senator MIKULSKI as our longest serving female Senator and wishing her many more years of accomplishment and service in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to add my voice to those of my colleagues as we commemorate an extraordinary milestone for a remarkable woman. Today, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI becomes the longest serving woman Senator.

For anyone who has had the privilege of working with or for Senator MIKULSKI, this milestone comes as no surprise. She is a devoted public servant and a dogged advocate for her constituents. She has spent the vast majority of her life in public service as a social worker, as a member of the Baltimore City Council, then as a Member of the House of Representatives, and finally as a Senator. With each step, her constituency got larger and she worked even harder to fight for the people of Maryland.

Senator MIKULSKI is no stranger to celebrating firsts or milestones. She was the first Democratic woman to be elected to the Senate in her own right without succeeding a spouse or a father. She was also the first woman to serve on the Senate Appropriations Committee.

It is also worth reflecting on how far we have come in the 24 years since Senator MIKULSKI was first elected. She was one of only two women in the Senate in 1987. In the next Senate, as in the last Senate, we are now up to 17 female Senators, meaning that they can no longer call us "Sweet 16."

As the dean of women Senators, Senator MIKULSKI has always been ready to help women who are thinking about running for the Senate and then help newly arrived women Senators when they get here. Her wise counsel is absolutely invaluable. Senator MIKULSKI has always reached across the aisle to bring women Senators together. As she puts it: "Women in the Senate understand issues not just on the macro level, but on the macaroni and cheese level."

Two years ago around this time, I went to the Senate floor with several of my women colleagues to speak about the importance of passing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Senator MIKULSKI had championed the bill for years. I remember Senator MIKULSKI bringing us all together and I will always remember her words. She would say:

To the women of America: Suit up, square your shoulders, put your lipstick on. We're ready for a revolution.

Senator MIKULSKI has always been a master of words and quips. She did it again, and we passed that bill.

On that issue, as on so many others, the cause that Senator MIKULSKI championed was victorious due in large part to her tremendous work ethic and her devoted advocacy.

Senator MIKULSKI, today we salute you for suiting up and squaring your shoulders for 24 years and counting, and we look forward to so many more.